

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 EA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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APPROVED BY HA:MLSCHNEIDER
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS STATE 219506

FOR AMBASSADOR CARTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM

SUBJECT: NEWS ARTICLE ON CAMBODIAN REFUGEES

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN CURRENT ISSUE (AUG. 25)
OF FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW:

ANOTHER 40,000 "CIA TRAITORS". REFUGEES ENTERING THAI-
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REGIME . BY RICHARD NATIONS

TA PHRAYA, THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER: TUAY MIEN, 38, A
KHMER ROUGE VETERAN OF EIGHT YEARS' STANDING, WAS PRESI-
DENT OF A MAJOR COOPERATIVE IN THE THMA POEK DISTRICT OF
NORTHERN BATTAMBANG, WHERE HE HAD THE REPUTATION OF BEING
A CRUEL AND ARBITRARY LEADER WHO HARSHLY PUNISHED MIS-
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DISTRICT JAIL IN THAILAND, MEEK AND CONTRITE. WITH THE
IRONY THAT SEEMS TO PREVAIL IN CAMBODIA TODAY, HE IS A
FUGITIVE OF A PURGE HE HELPED TO ORGANIZE. AND THE THAIS
HAVE JAILED HIM AS PROTECTION FROM THE REVENGE OF OTHER
REFUGEES WHO HAVE ALSO ESCAPED TO TA PHRAYA.

TUAY MIEN IS ONE OF THE 350 OR MORE REFUGEES WHO HAVE
GATHERED HERE DURING THE PAST MONTH AS A RESULT OF UP-
HEAVALS IN THMA POEK ABOUT A DAY'S WALK EAST OF TA PHRAYA
AND PREAH NET PRAH DISTRICT, 15 KMS EAST OF SISOPHON.

SINCE NOVEMBER 15 LAST YEAR REFUGEES ENTERING THAILAND HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AS "ILLEGAL ENTRANTS" AND - IN THEORY AT LEAST - HAD TO BE LEGALLY VETTED BEFORE, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE THAI AUTHORITIES, SOME WERE ALLOWED INTO CAMPS SPONSORED BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. BUT ABOUT FOUR MONTHS AGO THE NUMBERS OF CAMBODIAN ARRIVALS INCREASES SHARPLY TO MORE THAN 100 A MONTH, OVERCROWDING THE BORDER DETENTION CENTERS. WHEN THE LATEST WAVE HIT TA PHRAYA ALL THE THAIS COULD DO WAS PROVIDE THE REFUGEES WITH NEW CLOTHES, TWO MEALS A DAY, AND A TENT. WITH NO BARS OR BARBED WIRE TO KEEP THEM FROM MIXING WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION, THE REFUGEES' HEADS WERE SHAVED FOR EASY IDENTIFICATION.

IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER THE DISTURBANCES IN NORTHERN BATTAMBANG ARE ISOLATED AND LOCAL EVENTS - OR PART OF A WIDER PURGE. IF THE LATTER, IT WILL BE THE THIRD SUCH DRIVE IN THE -NORTHERN BORDER PROVINCES IN THE THREE YEARS SINCE CAMBODIA CAME UNDER KHMER ROUGE RULE IN APRIL 1975. THE FIRST TWO PURGES WERE DIRECTED AGAINST RELATIVELY RESTRICTED SECTORS OF THE POPULATION. THE FIRST, IN 1975-76, CONCENTRATED ON THE INTELLECTUALS AND SENIOR OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE LON NOL REGIME, UNCLASSIFIED

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AND THE SECOND, LAST YEAR, WAS DESIGNED TO ROOT OUT SEDITION FROM THE UPPER ECHELONS OF THE PARTY REGIONAL COMMAND. THE LATEST BATCH OF REFUGEES, HOWEVER, IS DRAWN FROM MUCH BROADER STRATA OF THE POPULATION - PEASANTS, FORMER MINOR OFFICIALS AND PARTY UNDERLINGS.

MEANWHILE, THERE ARE CLEAR SIGNS THAT PHNOM PENH IS RUNNING DOWN ITS TROOP STRENGTH ALONG THE THAI BORDER TO REPLENISH UNITS EXHAUSTED IN THE LATEST WAVE OF FIGHTING SINCE MID-JUNE ALONG THE VIETNAMESE BORDER - A FACT WHICH OBSERVORS HERE FEEL HAS PROBABLY MADE PHNOM PENH THAT MUCH MORE SUSPICIOUS OF DISAFFECTION IN ITS "REAR" AND OF THREATS FROM ACROSS THE THAI AND LAOTIAN BORDERS OR ALONG CAMBODIA'S SOUTHWESTERN COAST. RELIABLE SOURCES HERE SAY THAT VIETNAM HAS TRAINED A 25,000 STRONG MAN KHMER (LIBERATION FORCE) WHICH COULD BE INTRODUCED INTO CAMBODIA THROUGH A NUMBER OF ROUTES.

TUAY MIEN'S STORY UNDERSCORES CAMBODIA'S GROWING PARANOIA. EARLY IN APRIL HE HAD BEEN ORDERED BY HIGHER AUTHORITIES TO SURVEY THE 900 FAMILIES IN HIS COOPERATIVE TO IDENTIFY "SUSPICIOUS ELEMENTS". THE LIST WAS TO INCLUDE ALL INDIVIDUALS - AND THEIR FAMILIES - WHO WERE FORMER REGULARS IN THE LON NOL ARMY, MINOR OFFICIALS, SCHOOLTEACHERS, VILLAGE HEADMEN OF 10 FAMILY UNITS IN AREAS UNDER LON NOL'S CONTROL, AND ANYONE EDUCATED OR

TRAINED IN THAILAND OR VIETNAM. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WAS TO BE PAID TO THOSE WITH MILITARY BACKGROUNDS IN TRANSPORT, ARTILLERY AND THE SIGNAL CORPS.

TUAY MIEN SAYS HE FORMED A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT THE HOUSE-TO-HOUSE CENSUS, RELYING UPON EVERY THIRD FAMILY TO CROSS-CHECK THE OTHERS. WHEN THE JOB WAS FINISHED NO FEWER THAN 700 FAMILIES QUALIFIED FOR HIS LIST. DISQUIETING SIGNS OF A SIMILAR SCRUTINY SURFACED IN OTHER UNCLASSIFIED

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IN ANOTHER COOPERATIVE, 1 KM SOUTH OF DISTRICT HEAD-QUARTERS, WORD HAD LEAKED OUT IN EARLY JUNE THAT A BRUTAL AND THOROUGH SWEEP WAS IMMINENT. SON TUAY PLANNED TO FLEE THE DAY AFTER HIS BROTHER DISAPPEARED. HE PASSED THE WORD FURTIVELY TO FORMER LON NOL REGULARS AS THEY WORKED IN THE FIELD: "ARE YOU GOING?" "YES. TONIGHT, 9 O'CLOCK." SIXTEEN SET OUT FOR THAILAND THAT EVENING.

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HAW SUAN, A FORMER SCHOOLTEACHER FROM PHON PENH, LED A PARTY OF 25 FROM PHOUM SREH COOPERATIVE IN PREAH NET PREAH DISTRICT AFTER SOME 30 TEACHERS AND SOLDIERS DISAPPEARED FROM HIS VILLAGE. UNCLASSIFIED

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HEADQUARTERS.

IN THE HIGHLY-REGIMENTED AND COLLECTIVISED SOCIETY OF CAMBODIA, INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION BY THE AUTHORITIES IS REGARDED AS TANTAMOUNT TO CONVICTION. UNLIKE FORMER REFUGEES THE NEW GROUP AT TA PHRAYA IS MADE UP OVERWHELMINGLY OF MEN. MOST REFUGEES INTERVIEWED SAY THEY DID NOT HAVE TIME TO COLLECT THEIR FAMILIES BEFORE LEAVING.

ON JUNE 26, ACCORDING TO TUAY MIEN, OUTSIDE UNITS OF THE KHMER TOUGE MOVED INTO THMA POEK DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS ARRESTED THE FIVE-MAN RULING COMMITTEE AND DISARMED THE 100 MAN DISTRICT CIVIL MILITIA. FROM THERE THE OPERATION FANNED OUT TO THE DISTRICT'S 15 COOPERATIVES. ON JULY 5 TUAY MIEN AND HIS SUBORDINATES WERE ARRESTED. THAT DAY IT WAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THAT OF THE 70,000 CITIZENS IN THE DISTRICT, 40,000 WERE TRAITORS WHO HAD COLLABORATED WITH THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND CONCEALED THE NAMES OF FORMER LON NOL SOLDIERS AND AGENTS OF THAILAND AND VIETNAM. REFUGEES FROM NEARBY COOPERATIVES CONFIRM THIS EXTRAORDINARY DECLARATION.

TUAY MIEN HIMSELF WAS THROWN INTO A MAKESHIFT PRISON AND GIVEN NO FOOD FOR SEVEN DAYS. HE AND A FELLOW PRISONER, HOWEVER, MANAGED TO ESCAPE. HE SAYS THAT A HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM - "TRUE COMMUNISTS" - WERE BROUGHT IN TO REPLACE HIM AND HIS TWO SUBORDINATES. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION EXTENDED THE DIRECT CONTROL OF THE PARTY DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF THE 300-FAMILY COOPERATIVE SUBDIVISION. REFUGEES FROM SISOPHON REGION SAY THAT THE NEW COOPERATIVE LEADERS ARRIVING BETWEEN MAY AND JUNE WERE UNCLASSIFIED

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TWO FORMER KHMER ROUGE REGULARS FROM THE 300-MAN COMPANY 204 DEPLOYED ALONG THE FRONTIER OPPOSITE TA PHRAYA TOLD THE REVIEW THAT THEIR UNITS HAD BEEN THINNED OUT BY ONE-THIRD SINCE LATE JUNE. "THE FITTEST AND THOSE WITH REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTING EXPERIENCE WERE SELECTED FOR

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 219506

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 219506 ACTION GENEVA DATED AUG 29:

QTE: UNCLAS STATE 219506

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From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808122/baaaezqb.tel
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Review Event:
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Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1588961
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEWS ARTICLE ON CAMBODIAN REFUGEES
TAGS: SHUM, SOPN, CA
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/74d5f759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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